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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4709

INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L RIGA 000084

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/14/2018

TAGS: PREL MARR NATO MK GR LR

SUBJECT: LATVIA FOLLOWING MACEDONIA NAME DISPUTE WITH GREECE WITH INTEREST

REF: SECSTATE 14821

Classified By: POL/ECON CHIEF TAMIR G. WASER. REASON: 1.4 (d)

(C) Pol/econ chief delivered reftel points February 14 to Latvia MFA political director Peteris Ustubs. Ustubs said that the information was especially timely as FM Riekstins would visit Skopje February 21 as part of Latvia's assessment of the readiness of the A3 countries for NATO membership. Latvia did not think it could influence either side on the name issue, but appreciated knowing the US position in advance of the minister's visit. Ustubs strongly supported the idea that the name dispute should not be the basis for denying Macedonia admission to NATO, if its performance were up to standards, but also agreed that we needed to be prepared within the alliance for such a possibility and consider what message leaders would send Skopje from Bucharest if Greece blocked an invitation.

LARSON